**INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)**

TWENTY-SECOND REGULAR PERIOD OF SESSIONS OEA/Ser.L/X.2.22

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REMARKS OF LUIS OLIVEIRA, SECRETARY FOR THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES FOR THE TWENTY SECOND REGULAR PERIOD OF SESSIONS OF THE INTER AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM

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Good morning. I am delighted to inaugurate the 22nd annual meeting of the Inter American Committee against Terrorism (otherwise known as CICTE). Welcome to CICTE points of contact and other national authorities of OAS member states. I also want to extend a warm welcome to the Missions of OAS observer states as well as other distinguished representatives of the public and private sectors and key donors, all of whom support CICTE’s work.

For those of you who don’t know me yet, I am Luis Oliveira, Secretary for the Multidimensional Security Department. I am a Brazilian national who formerly served in various different capacities in the Brazilian government. I arrived at the OAS this past spring to oversee OAS efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, illicit drugs and transnational organized crime and also to lead lead efforts to strengthen public security throughout the region. I see a number of you regularly through our work at the Committee of Hemispheric Security.

But today I am very pleased to join you all to help open this important annual meeting to take stock of the Hemisphere’s efforts to prevent and counter terrorism. As you will hear later today, many of CICTE’s programs have evolved and matured over the past year. We also have launched a few new initiatives that will interest you.

Terrorism related incidents, as you know, continue to occur in our region, notwithstanding the good progress that member states have made to address this phenomenon. Last year the University of Maryland made a presentation to the Committee on Hemispheric Security on the scope of the problem in the Western Hemisphere.

According to the University of Maryland’s Global Terrorism Database which attempts to quantify trends in this area, there were approximately 2,100 deaths caused by incidents recognized by our governments over the last two decades. From 1970 until 2018 – a much broader period of time -- the University of Maryland estimates that 30,237 people died due to terrorism incidents. And related to this, it is estimated that terrorist incidents caused an economic cost of more than USD $2.270 billion dollars from 1970 to 2018. All these figures vary depend on definitions used and it is difficult to neatly quantify losses. But the toll on our region over the years from terrorism related events is significant.

Against this backdrop, the year 2022 is actually providing a number of opportunities for our region to reflect on the counter-terrorism architecture currently in place. First, we had an opportunity to recognize a number of different efforts underway during our annual commemoration of June 3 as the Inter-American Day against Terrorism. That special session of the Committee on Hemispheric Security served to reaffirm OAS states’ resolve to address terrorism related activities in the region.

In addition, Secretary General Almagro recently convened a meeting for September 12 of this year of the States Party to the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. As you will hear, this initiative will consist of 2-day virtual experts meeting leading up to a high-level, ministerial meeting of security authorities who are responsible for countering terrorism in our Hemisphere.

We expect these meetings will take a critical and constructive look at the relevance of the Convention and its implementation as well as the progress made, challenges and lessons learned over the two decades since its adoption. I expect you will hear more on this from my esteemed collogues from the Government of Peru later today.

But for now, I would just like to point out now that the OAS Secretary General and the Government of Peru issued a Joint Declaration in December 2021 in connection with the Secretary General’s visit to Lima. In that Declaration, Secretary Almagro welcomed the Government of Peru’s suggestion to hold the meeting of States Party. He noted the initiative would serve to clearly express the region’s continued commitment to the fight against terrorism, as well as to strengthen CICTE’s work in this area.

 I expect that the discussions in September will not only build on a series of parallel meetings held by Counter Terrorism ministers of the region in recent years, but will also be shaped by the discussions that took place at last month’s 9th Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles. In that Summit, as you know, leaders of the Americas focused on increasing cooperation on shared challenges, including promoting economic prosperity. As part of this effort, the Summit focused on efforts to create more resilient supply chains, which is one of the topics you will hear much more on in our panel today. While private parties create and manage supply chains, the conditions under which goods are permitted to cross borders are set in large part by national authorities. Our panel on supply chain will cover these topics as well as discuss an initiative to promote a regional meeting to promote a comprehensive approach to border management in the Americas.

 The outcomes of all these processes, together with the outcome of today’s meeting, including approval of CICTE’s work plan, will --I believe-- position CICTE and our Member States to make substantial contributions to next year’s (anticipated) Biennial High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of UN Member States and the biennial review of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

 Before I conclude I want to say a few general words on CICTE’s programming. For more than two decades, the CICTE Secretariat has responded to the region’s evolving counter terrorism needs and priorities with innovative programming that serves all OAS Member States. Those programs have helped not only to build greater capacity in the field, but also have helped to promote political and economic stability in the Western Hemisphere. I expect CICTE programs will continue to serve this role and will move in new directions, as necessary, especially as our region begins to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

 This morning CICTE’s Executive Secretary, Alison August Treppel, will review CICTE’s latest work in more detail – and highlight areas in which the Committee works to secure land/sea/air operations as well as promote security in the cyber sphere. I urge you to take the time today to lend your government’s expertise and perspective on the best ways to keep us one step ahead of our region’s evolving security challenges.

As we begin this 22nd session of CICTE, I’d like to offer our sincere thanks to the Government of Guyana, and particularly Mr. James Singh, for chairing CICTE this past year with such motivation, determination and enthusiasm. On behalf of SMS, thank you very much for your support of our important work.

We also thank the Government of Mexico for their work as CICTE’s Vice Chair, and as such, for their valuable contributions to the preparation of today’s meeting.

And finally, I want to take a moment to remember the victims of terrorism worldwide. As we recalled this year on June 3rd – Inter American Day Against Terrorism – we need to keep advancing our counter terrorism efforts to honor those who have fallen, and those who have suffered, both on the individual and on the societal level.

This Fall the United Nations will host a UN Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism to advance the rights and needs of victims of terrorism. I applaud that effort and I reaffirm the OAS’s efforts – through CICTE -- to stand in solidarity with all victims, including those in our region.

Thank you to all participants today for your efforts and I wish you the best in your discussions this morning.

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